

GLOSSARY

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Anaerobic. Able to live without oxygen.

Aseptic technique. Method used to prevent contamination in procedures where sterility is necessary.

Asymptomatic. Without symptoms.

Attack rate. The proportion of a well-defined population that develops illness over a limited period of time, as during an epidemic or outbreak. It is often expressed as a percentage. The difference between attack rates for those exposed and nonexposed to a particular food provides important clues in the investigation of the etiology of an acute outbreak.

Aw (water activity). See water activity.

Bacteria. One-celled living microorganisms with a cell wall.

Bioassay. The determination of the strength of a drug or substance by comparing its effect on a live animal or an isolated organ preparation to the effect of a standard preparation.

Carrier. An individual who harbors a pathogen but does not exhibit symptoms of disease and may be a source of infection.

Case. An infected or diseased person or animal having specific clinical, laboratory and epidemiologic characteristics.

Colonization. Multiplication of a microorganism on or within a host without causing cellular injury. A colonized host can serve as a source of infection.

Communicability (Period of). The interval during which a person or animal that has an infection is a potential source of infection.

Comminuted. Reduced in size by methods including chopping, flaking, grinding or mincing. Includes fish or meat products that are reduced in size and restructured or reformulated such as gefilte fish, gyros, ground beef, and sausage; and a mixture of two or more types of meat that have been reduced in size and combined, such as sausages made from two or more meats.

Contact. A person or animal that has been in such association with an infected person or animal, or a contaminated environment, as to have had an opportunity to acquire the etiologic agent.

Endemic. The expected, or the usual prevalence, of a disease or infectious agent in human populations within a given geographic area.

Enteric. Pertaining to the gastrointestinal tract.

Epidemic. A disease occurring in a greater-than-usual number of individuals in a community at the same time.

Epidemic curve. A graph that depicts the association of the time of onset of illness of all cases that are associated with the outbreak. It helps to determine whether the outbreak originated from a common source or a person to person spread.

Epidemiologist. A person who applies epidemiologic principles and methods to the prevention and control of disease.

Epidemiology. Study of the distribution and determinants of health-related states and events in populations, and the application of this study to the control of health problems.

Etiology. The cause of a disease (i.e., type of bacteria, virus, toxin, etc.)

Fecal-oral transmission. A disease-causing organism that is shed in humans or animals and is deposited on a food item which is then eaten.

Foodborne disease. Illness resulting from ingestion of contaminated food.

Foodborne pathogens. Microorganisms causing illness through ingestion of food.

Genus. In biology, a category of classification for living organisms. This group is between the species and the family.

GI. Gastrointestinal.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome. Nerve damage resulting in varying degrees of paralysis or weakness, usually reversible.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). HACCP is a concept which permits a systematic approach to the identification and assessment of hazards and risks associated with the manufacture, distribution and use of a food product, as well as the definition of preventive measures for their control.

Hermetically-sealed. Airtight.

Host. Organisms, including man, that are capable of being infected by a specific agent (e.g., a person infected by contaminated food).

HUS (Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome). An acute condition consisting of anemia due to red blood cell damage, low platelet count, bleeding tendency and kidney damage.

Hypothesis. An unproven assertion or statement, based on available information, which commonly deals with the identity of an etiologic agent, the source of infection and the mode of transmission. Its role is to provide a rational basis for further investigation.

Imminent health hazard. A significant threat or danger to health that is considered to exist when there is sufficient evidence to show that a product, practice, circumstance, or event creates a situation that requires immediate correction or cessation of operation to prevent injury based on: 1) the number of potential injuries, and 2) the nature, severity, and duration of the anticipated injury.

Immune globulin (IG). A solution of antibodies that is effective in preventing hepatitis A if given prior to exposure or in the early incubation period after exposure to hepatitis A virus.

Immunity. Defense system against disease, including non-specific host defense mechanisms and acquired defense, such as antibodies and white blood cells.

Immunocompromised. An immune system functioning in a less than optimal manner or at an overall reduced level.

Incubation period. Time from ingestion or other acquisition of a pathogen until symptoms occur in the human body.

Infectivity. The ability of an agent to infect a host.

Infective Dose. The quantity of bacterial cells, viral particles, or parasitic cysts required to induce illness.

Infectious period. Time period during which one is capable of transmitting a disease to others.

Invasive. The ability of a microorganism to enter the body and to spread throughout the tissues.

Investigations. Studies conducted to identify the source of individual cases and the mode of the pathogen's transmission.

Isolate. To obtain a pure culture of an infectious agent, such as bacteria or viruses.

Microbial. Relating to microorganisms (e.g., bacteria).

Mucoid. Mucus-like.

Mucopurulent. Consisting of pus and mucus.

Outbreak. The occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from the ingestion of a common food OR different foods in a common place. An outbreak may also be defined as a situation when the observed number of cases unaccountably exceeds the expected number.

Parasite. An organism living on or within an animal of another species, from which it obtains nutrients.

Pasteurization. The process of heating a fluid or food at a moderate temperature for a definite period of time in order to destroy undesirable bacteria without changing to any extent its chemical composition.

Pathogen. A microorganism capable of producing a disease.

Pathogenic. Productive of disease.

Pathogenesis. Origin and development of disease.

Pathogenicity. Capacity of an organism to cause disease.

pH. An expression used to indicate the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a substance: pH 7 is neutral; acids have pH less than 7; bases have pH more than 7.

Plausible. Having an appearance of truth or reason but usually open to question.

Protozoa. One cell organisms with cell nuclei and other structures.

Quarantine. The application of measures to prevent contact between infected and uninfected persons.

Risk. The likelihood of the occurrence of a hazard (e.g., illness).

Septicemia. Presence of pathogenic bacteria in the blood. If allowed to progress, the organisms may multiply and cause an overwhelming infection and death.

Sequelae. A condition that may be of long duration following and resulting from a disease.

Serotype. In microbiology, a microorganism determined by the kinds and combinations of specific chemical structures that interact with specific antibodies.

Spore. A reproductive cell, usually unicellular, produced by plants, some protozoa, and certain bacteria. The spores of bacteria are difficult to destroy because they are very resistant to heat and require prolonged exposure to high temperatures to destroy them.

Species (spp.). In biology, a category of classification for living organisms. This group is just below genus.

Surveillance. The collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of information.

Toxigenic. The ability of an organism to elicit toxic symptoms.

Toxic Dose. The quantity of toxin required to induce illness.

Toxin. Proteins or conjugated protein substances which can be lethal to other organisms. They are produced by some higher plants, certain animals and pathogenic bacteria.

Virulence. Relative power and degree of pathogenicity possessed by organisms that produce disease.

Viruses. A minute organism too small to be seen with a light microscope yet visible with an electron microscope. It is entirely dependent on living cells for its metabolic and reproductive needs.

Water activity (Aw). A unit of measurement reflecting the amount of moisture that is readily available for the metabolic activity of microorganisms. A reduction of water availability will reduce microbial proliferation.